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ABSTRACT

The Minneapolis public elementary school program in Spanish is described. It was established in 1974 as a FLES program in kindergarten and first grade, later established as part of a fundamental school alternative, and recently expanded to a partial immersion program. Children ideally follow the program from kindergarten through sixth grade. A variety of subjects are taught entirely in Spanish, and commercial texts are used in almost all subjects and grades. The principal teaching method is Total Physical Response. Little is taught by rote, except for key words and expressions that will help the children move through the school day. Children eagerly learn to read in Spanish as their first language reading skills become established, often in third grade. The mathematics and social studies materials are written for native Spanish-speakers, so instruction relies heavily on manipulatives and discussion. The classroom atmosphere reflects aspects of Spanish language and culture, the school store is conducted in Spanish, and certificates and awards are in Spanish for the program pupils. Publishers and other related resources are listed. (MSE)

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BUILDING RESOURCES FOR A SPANISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Nancy Andrews

Presented at the Second International Conference on Second/Foreign Language Acquisition by Children (November 20-21, 1986 in Dallas)

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BUILDING RESOURCES FOR A SPANISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAM

PRESENTED BY
NANCY ANDREWS, GERTRUDIS VELA-KOSKA AND MARLENE WILSON

The Minneapolis Public Schools have continually been in the forefront of the latest educational advancements and methodologies. Our districts open-mindedness has allowed each of its many diverse programs to flourish and grow. Minneapolis has always taken a special interest in languages and several years ago initiated a Spanish language program in one of its schools. Since its first inception, we have seen our program grow by leaps and bounds. As a result, in order for readers to understand what we do today, we need to tell you how our program began.

The Spanish language was first offered at Wilder Fundamentals School in 1974 as part of a magnet program to help desegregate the schools. Our building is located in the inner city. Originally it housed three schools: an open school, continuous progress school and the contemporary school. The open and continuous progress schools were alternative programs and could draw many majority students from the outer limits of the city by virtue of their alternative teaching styles.

The contemporary program, of which we were a part , was the same model as the neighborhood school: a self contained classroom with one teacher all day long. A drawing card was needed to attract the majority students in to the Wilder Contemporary School. An administrator heard about the Cincinnati German bilingual school at a conference in San Diego. A visit was made to Cincinnati and a decision was made to offer a similar program at Wilder Contemporary in Spanish.

The first year of the program, in 1974, Spanish was offered in two kindergarten sessions and one first grade. The teachers were bilingual and taught a Spanish lesson each day, as well as incorporating it into their daily routines. Students were enrolled strictly by parental choice and a waiting list was established. There was also a resource teacher that first year that provided a thirty minute daily Spanish lesson for the students in the other grades that chose to learn it.

Each subsequent year one bilingual classroom was added at each grade level. Gradually, the resource model was phased out and eventually there was one Spanish class at each grade level. The program continued in this mode officially until the fall of 1985.

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We are now a part of the fundamentals school alternative. We share a building and resource staff with the fundamentals school. Parents first choose fundamentals as an educational alternative and then may choose the Spanish partial immersion program. We still have one classroom per grade level, we are seven teachers out of twenty-five classrooms. Our students are not specially selected, rather it is 100% parental choice. Because there are two kindergarten sessions going into one first grade, those children are chosen by a lottery and the rest may be put on a waiting list for openings. We serve approximately 250 students out of 900.

Children ideally enter our program in kindergarten and continue together to 6th grade. Because of natural attrition, new students may enter at any grade level when openings are available. The entrance of students new to the Spanish program causes some problems, especially in the upper grades where it is more common. We have used cross-age tutoring and have recently acquired a Spanish tutor to help the new program entrants "catch-up." We have the added advantage of being the ESL center for all the Hispanic students in the city. They are generally placed in our classrooms and we have anywhere from two to seven native speakers in our classes.

Our teachers are all certified elementary teachers who were hired to be classroom teachers and then later accepted as immersion teachers because of their second language ability. Although there is no teacher qualification program, several of our immersion teachers have taken the Minnesota Language Assessment exam. We hope to eventually have some form of language competency testing for all teachers in our program.

In 1985, our district language consultant applied for and received a grant from the Minnesota Council on Quality Education (CQE) which is renewable for three years. Our goal is to put together a model partial immersion program which will be available for dissemination to interested districts throughout Minnesota. Our grant provides us with a resource teacher, who has been writing curriculum for use in our immersion program, as well as, a consultant who visits and observes our classrooms regularly and holds afterschool workshops for our teachers. Our goal is to be teaching all math, science and social studies in Spanish by the spring of 1988.

Our program's turning point from a FLES program to partial immersion program came when Wilder received its CQE grant. The resources that the grant provided us with allowed us to begin teaching

content areas in Spanish. We are now using Spanish as a means of delivering curriculum to the children rather than teaching it as an end in itself. We teach a variety of subjects in totally in Spanish. These subjects include math, social studies, some science, as well as, other curriculum areas that easily lend themselves to Spanish like art projects and handwriting.

Commericial textbook materials are used at all grade levels in mathematics and at all but fourth grade (regional area texts are presently unavailable in Spanish) in social studies. Science materials are adaptations of the science kits developed by Minneapolis Public Schools. In addditon we use additonal units and supplementary material written for us by our COE funded resource teacher. Most teachers have also developed and made many materials as well. All classrooms use Spanish for dealing with classroom routines and daily business--attendance, collecting money , passing and collecting supplies, moving through the building and so on.

The amount of time spent in the target language varies somewhat from classroom to classroom, but by the third grade approximately half of the school day is spent completely in Spanish. Our days are divided into Spanish and English blocks and a sign is posted in each classroom that reminds everyone which language is being used. During Spanish times, all communications on the part of the teacher are in Spanish, discipline situations are also dealt with in the target language during these times.

In kindergarten and first grade the basics are introduced--colors, numbers, greetings, using the calendar and so on. The social studies focus is on the self and the family, both highly motivating subjects for young children. Counting, number recognition and number concepts are introduced at the kindergaren level primarily through the use of manipulatives. Workbook materials are availabe at the kindergarten level, but are not the main source of instruction. The first grade teacher continues with manipulatives, and also uses more workbook activities, as does the second grade teacher.

The second grade teacher continues with the morning meeting that was introduced at the kindergarten and frist grades and moves into a study of neighborhoods for social studies. By now most children are perfectly comfortable with all classroom management being conducted in Spanish.

Third grade continues with math, social studies and science. Some health units, art projects and all handwriting are also taught in Spanish. In addition a routine business is conducted in Spanish and some beginning reading and writing takes place on an informal basis.

The intermediate grades continue to expand on the math and social studies concepts developed at the earlier grades. There is more emphasis placed on developing some reading and writing skills, but there is no formal reading or language arts program in place at this time at any grade level. We are however, in the process of selecting materials for the teaching of these subjects. Our current plans are to introduce Spanish language arts in the third grade while continuing with reading in English.

What strategies do we use? How do we accomplish all that we do? Total Physical Response is the primary method by which we introduce vocabulary to the students. TPR is based on the way we all acquired our native language. From infancy we were surrounded by people giving us directions--give Daddy a kiss, wave bye bye, throw me the ball, show me your nose and so on. We received much praise and positive feedback as we responded to these directions and soon did not need to rely on the modeling done by parents and others around us. No one insisited that that we begin to speak immediately, and so it is with TPR. Gradually the commands became more complex and unique, and gradually we began not only to follow the directions, but as we were ready, began to repeat words and to give directions ourselves! There is a sequence of questioning that is used in conjunction with TPR that helps children begin to speak as they become comfortable with the language. There are a number of good books available that give complete explanations of TPR. These include books by James Asher and Berty Segal.

We do not insist that the children speak in Spanish, although we strongly encourage them to communicate in Spanish as soon as they are comfortable doing so. There is very little rote learning involved in our program--vocabulary is taught as it becomes useful to the child and not for its own sake. We do use memorized songs and rhymes because they appeal to the child's sense of playfulness, but we don't memorize lists of words, verb forms, etc. We do not teach Spanish grammar, per se, but it is acquired naturally as the child hears the language being spoken.

"Passwords" are one thing we do teach by rote at times. These passwords or key expressions are phrases and sentences that are very useful in daily life. We try to teach the kinds of things that help the child move more easily through the school day--courtesy phrases, asking permission to go to the bathroom, to get a drink and so on. At holiday times and other special times of the year we incorporate special greetings and phrases.

Although there is no formalized reading program, we are finding that children become eager to begin

reading Spanish as their first language reading skills become solid. Marlene Wilson finds that by the beginning of the third grade, about half the class is beginning to "pick up" some reading skill but the level is that of a beginning reader. She capitalizes on their interest in beginning to read and write by using a daily paragraph or two on the chalkboard each morning to summarize the planned activities for the day. Later in the day the children work in pairs to write "journal" or diary type entries on a large calendar in the classroom. Students gain some beginning reading and writing skills in this way but it is not a formalized reading or writing program.

Both the math and the social studies series we use are written for the child who is a native speaker of Spanish--therefore the vocabulary load is very heavy for the children to read. Consequently with the social studies texts, we rely heavily on discussion of the maps, charts and pictures in the book, rather than attempting to read all the material. Some of the more able children in the upper grades are able to read and understand much of what is written, but for the most part interpretation--not translation!--of the material by the teacher is needed. We use a great deal of "caretaker speech," tailoring our sentence structure and vocabulary to the ability of level of the children, just as parents do quite naturally with young children.

In math, we rely heavily on the use of manipulatives either by the children or as demonstrations by the teacher. The use of the overhead is extensively used at some grade levels particularly to in presenting new material. Keeping physically involved as much as possible is also essential in second language learning. Teachers try and incorporate the use of as many senses as possible to assist in the internalization of new materials. Students and teachers point to, circle, cross out, underline, act out story problems, as well as, write on the chalkboard and the overhead all in the attempt to help in the learning process.

In a language classroom, the atmosphere is particularly important. Spanish needs to be kept in front of the children all of the time. Children need to see that the Spanish being used is a valuable and communicative tool. Labeling, posters, calendars, helper charts, Spanish alphabet cards are all classroom items that need to be in Spanish. There should be realia as well--flags, art work, crafts, etc. Some teachers have their students choose Spanish names to help maintain the Spanish feeling in the room.

We integrate culture in a variety of ways. We use songs, poems and rhymes and those who are comfortable with it teach dances of various countries. Arts and crafts are also readily integrated at all grade levels. We have a number of movies at different levels avilable from the Minneapolis film library. These are very useful in helping the children better understand the lifestyles of other countries and in additon, give them the opportunity to hear more native speakers as models. Some teachers have done cooking with the children, but as our school population has increased we have lost our home economics classroom facilities. The parents of some of our ESL children have come in to share their information about their home countries with us.

The fifth and sixth graders last year had much experience in writing and performing Spanish commercials. These were presented on our schoolwide closed circuit Wilder Information Network news program which was seen weekly by all 900 students in the school. This year for the first time our school store is being conducted in Spanish. Certificates to recognize and reward good behavior are awarded weekly and those children in the Spanish as a second language classes receive theirs written in Spanish. In the upper grades ¿Qué Tal?, a Scholastic news magazine, is used in preference to the English version.

We are building a good collection of Spanish language trade books which are housed in the Media Center and are available to all children in the school. In addition, we have a growing collection of records, filmstrips, posters, charts and so on which are very helpful to us.

The biggest ingredients in the success of our program have been hard work, commitment and enthusiasm on the part of the teachers and students. We have enjoyed strong support from our parents for what we are trying to do. We are learning to be comfortable teaching in a "fishbowl" atmosphere as we have more visitors coming to visit our program. We are excited about participating in a learning experience that gives our children not only the good education that all Minneapolis children are receiving, but which gives them the added bonus of acquiring a second language at the same time.

LISTINGS OF USEFUL RESOURCES AND ADDRESSES

FUNDING INFORMATION:

The following areas may assist you with funding

+Begin by getting funds through Federal Grants. Thousands of dollars are given out anually. Consult your administrators in your district can give you more information

+Approach your state universities in the department of Languages There is often money set aside for just such collaborations between universities and public schools.

+Write to the National Endowment for the Humanities in Washington, D.C. and the Rockefeller Foundation Grants are given anually to worthy proposals Please consult your local library for addresses and contact persons.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Further information about The Wilder Fundamentals Partial Immersion Program can be attained by writing to:

Lee Lundin
Minneapolis Public Schools
World Languages Consultant
Dept. of World Languages
807 NE Broadway
Minneapolis, MN 55413
(612) 627-2184

or

Fred Dietrich
Principal
Wilder Fundamentals
3322 Elliot Ave. So.
Minneapolis, MN 55407

(612) 627-2534

CURRICULUM COE MATERIALS

Materials developed for our program and the Minneapolis Public Schools are currently available for dissemination In addition to curriculum materials, our school District has a video that shows the Wilder Progam in action A price list containing these item will be made available upon request. Please address requests to either one of the above addresses

PUBLISHERS OF ELEMENTARY SECOND LANGUAGE MATERIALS

The following is a partial listing of publishers. A lengthier list can be provided upon request.

Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.
2725 Sandhill Rd
Menlo Park., CA 94025
(415) 854-0300

Arizona Bilingual Materials Ctr.
College of Education, Box 601
Univ. of Arizona
Tucson, AZ 85721

Continental Press, Inc.
Elizabethtown, PA 17022
(800) 233-0759

The Economy Co
P.O Box 25308
1901 North Walnut St
Oklahoma City, OK 73125

Harper & Row Pub., Inc
1700 Montgomery St.
San Francisco, CA 94111
(415) 989-9000

D C Heath & Co
125 Spring St.
Lexington, MA 02173

PUBLISHERS CONTINUED:

Holt, Reinhart & Winston
383 Madison Ave
New York, NY 10017

Charles Merrill Publishing Co.
Columbus, OH 43216

National Textbook Co.
P O Box 1003
Austin, TX 78702

Rio Grande Book Store
P O Box 2795
1101 Upas
McAllen, TX 78502
(512) 682-7531

Santillana Publishing Co.
257 Union St
Northvale, NJ 07647
(201) 767-6961

Scott, Foresman & Co.
1900 East Lake Ave
Glenview, IL 60025

Scholastic International
50 W 44th St
Oakland, CA 94606
(415) 451-0511

Sky Oaks Productions, Inc.
P O Box 1102
Los Gatos, CA 95031

Silver-Burdette
Morristown, NJ 07960-1918

South-Western Publishing Co.
5101 Madison Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45227

Volunlad Publishers, Inc
7800 Shoal Creek Blvd.
Austin, TX 78757

Wible Language Institute, Inc
24 South 8th
P O Box 870
Allentown, PA 18105

OTHER SOURCES

For free items, write to the **embassy or government tourist office** of the country you are interested in and ask for specific items or information. We were pleasantly surprised with beautiful posters and booklets by some of the countries we wrote to. Addresses can be attained at your local library or a listing can be provided by Minneapolis Public Schools for a nominal fee.

Enseñado Por Medio de Acción Berty Segal. Berty Segal Inc., 1982.

Booklet containing a variety of T.P.R. activities.

Learnining Another Language Through Actions James Asher. Sky Oaks Productions, Inc., 1981.

Booklet containing basic information on Total Physical Response (TPR) and its implementation in the classroom.

Milwaukee Public Schools
55th St. School
2765 South 55th St
Milwaukee, WI 53219

The Milwaukee Schools have a large collection of curriculum materials and guides that we have found indispensible. For more informatior direct your inquiries to Susan Buss at the above address.

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